

# **CHALFONT HEIGHTS ROADS COMMITTEE**

## **DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE**

**No development work may start on any project within the Estate until the Chalfont Heights Roads Committee has given written approval and received the appropriate fee.**

**This document is intended to give guidance to residents and developers**

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### **1 Introduction**

The primary purpose of this document is to help retain the pleasant environment of the estate and to ensure that any development within it is harmonious and respects the special character for the benefit of current and future residents. In order to do this, it gives guidance to designers on the principles that the committee will follow in assessing whether a proposed development is acceptable, and to contractors on how the estate and its amenities are to be protected during construction.

### **2. Definition of a Development**

A development is any building work which affects the size or appearance of a property on the estate. It does not include normal maintenance work, or wholly internal alterations such as kitchen or bathroom renewal, or removal of internal walls. It does include extensions, conservatories, porches, rebuilds, new garages, garage conversions, new dormer windows, new vehicle access on to estate roads and major external changes such as complete refenestration or changes in the existing ground levels by more than one metre that may affect the external character of the house and gardens.

### **3. Context**

The Chalfont Heights Estate was established in 1927 as a private, rural housing estate when Lewis Stroud, a London lawyer, purchased 122 acres of farmland at Winkers Farm and Swan Farm, which were once the home farms for Chalfont Park Manor. Stroud and his son Frederick laid out roads, verges and generous housing plots, and planted hundreds of trees.

Over the years, individual plots have been developed and there are now 197 homes on the estate, which still retains its green nature and rural peaceful atmosphere.

In September 1965 a formal conveyance was drawn up transferring ownership of the roads, islands, verges and verge trees to four resident trustees, together with the benefits of the covenants on each housing plot. In October 2009 the trustees transferred the above ownership and benefits to the directors of the newly formed Chalfont Heights Roads Committee Limited. These voluntary directors are all residents of the estate, and are confirmed in office at the Annual General Meeting of the Roads Committee, which is open to all estate residents.

The covenants originally established in 1927 are still valid and give authority to the Roads Committee to approve or reject any proposed developments. In recent years lawyers handling the sale or purchase of properties have been unable to process the conveyance if it has been found that extensions or other developments do not have the requisite written approval of the directors under the covenant.

The wording of the covenants is:

*'No dwelling house or other building or additions to buildings shall be erected otherwise than in accordance with plans and specifications to be submitted and approved by the Trustee's architect before the building is commenced'*

An annual charge is made to all households in order to fund the ongoing maintenance of the roads and verges. In addition a development fee is charged on all development projects to cover the additional wear and tear caused by construction traffic on the estate roads, which were neither constructed nor laid out to take large, heavy construction vehicles.

#### **4. Relationship to Local Planning Regulations**

The local planning authority is Chiltern District Council, and any proposed development requiring planning consent must be submitted to them for approval.

**However, any development (as defined in section 2 of this document) on the estate will require the written consent of the Chalfont Heights Roads Committee, whether or not planning consent is required or obtained.**

The Design Guidance given by the Roads Committee is complementary to the CDC Planning Guidelines, but is separate, distinct and specific to the estate.

Planning approval by the Chiltern District Council does not necessarily mean that the Roads Committee will give their approval, and vice---versa.

Residents are reminded that any development may require Buildings Regulations approval from the Local Authority.

## **5. Design Guidance**

**The estate has a unique and special character with houses of individual design, well proportioned for their plots, set well back from the road and with adequate space between neighbouring buildings. Proposals must retain these characteristics and not vary significantly from the mass, scale and proportions of other houses in the near vicinity. Proposals for new dwellings, which would affect significantly the density of buildings or damage the special character will not be approved.**

The Roads Committee will seek the advice of their Architectural Adviser, and may decide to approve, seek amendments or reject plans. Each case will be considered on its merits, and the following guidelines will generally apply:

1. The plot size of any proposed development, in terms of shape, magnitude, road frontage and the position of any house within the plot, should not be significantly at variance with existing plots in the vicinity.
2. Each proposed dwelling must have an existing frontage onto an existing road. An existing road is defined as a metalled carriageway used by vehicular traffic, and fronted by existing dwellings with front elevations facing the carriageway. Backland development of existing gardens will not be permitted.
3. New buildings or extensions must be designed to protect and preserve the privacy of neighbours and minimise overlooking or overshadowing of adjacent houses and gardens.
4. The frontage building line to the existing should be generally maintained, and the general height of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the plot should not be exceeded.
5. The form of the existing residential development should be maintained; i.e. detached houses in large plots with generous garden space. Additions which extend to the site boundaries will not be considered favourably.
6. The size, design and external materials should be compatible with the character of existing houses in the vicinity. Exceptions in terms of design and materials may be considered in proposals of exceptionally high design quality, and which can be justified by the designer. Extensions to existing buildings should match closely the existing character and materials.
7. Important features which are characteristic of the estate must be retained. These include trees, shrubs, hedges, verges and absence of kerbs and footways.
8. The road verges and trees thereon are the property of the estate and must remain intact and unaltered.

9. Any additional vehicular access across the verge, whether permanent or temporary, or any alteration to existing access, requires the written consent of the Roads Committee, which will consider such issues as safety and impact on the appearance of the estate. Additional permanent access across the verge will be subject to a substantial fee. Temporary access will attract a lesser fee.
10. Front boundaries can be left open to the verge, or marked with open timber or metal fencing less than one metre in height, or by hedges, or by a combination of both fences and hedging. 'Solid' fencing or gates or brick walls will be discouraged in order to preserve the green open character of the estate. Residents and developers are reminded that fences, walls or gates above one metre in height which adjoin the highway will, in any case, require planning consent from Chiltern District Council.
11. Where existing garages are integral with the house, or permanently linked to it with solid enclosed construction, there is no objection in principle to these being converted to domestic use (only) as part of the existing house, provided that this is done harmoniously, and where there remains adequate car parking within the curtilage of the site. Conversion of garages, or parts of garages, that are separate buildings will not normally be permitted. New garages in front of the existing house, or where an integral garage has been converted previously to domestic use, are unlikely to be considered favourably.

## **6 Guidance to Contactors**

**Any property owner undertaking building work is required to agree to these general conditions, and to ensure that they are complied with by any builders or contractors that they employ, and to incorporate them into any construction contract whenever possible.**

- 1) The roads and verges are owned by the Directors of the Estate on behalf of all residents, and cannot form part of any development site.
- 2) All works are to be carried out in such a way as to minimise noise, dust disturbance and inconvenience to neighbours and other residents.
- 3) The estate roads are to be kept clean and free from soil, mud, rubbish etc at all times. Plant, building materials, skips, vehicles or other obstructions must be contained within the property boundaries and not left on roads or verges without the express prior written agreement of the Roads Committee.
- 4) A photographic record will be made of the condition of the adjacent roads and verges prior to the commencement of any work. Any damage attributable to the construction work is to be made good by the house owner at no expense to the estate, and to the reasonable satisfaction of the Roads Committee.
- 5) The form of the existing residential development should be maintained; i.e. detached houses in large plots with generous garden space. Additions which extend to the boundaries will not be considered favourably.

- 6) Estate trees on the verges in front and opposite the property, and any trees to be retained within the site, are to be protected with padding or robust fencing. Care must be taken not to damage tree roots during excavation.
- 7) Existing services such as gas, water and electricity may run beneath the verges. Any excavation on the verges is to be hand dug in order to protect both the services and workmen.
- 8) The contractor is to provide the maximum possible area of temporary hard standing within the site for parking vehicles and plant, loading, unloading and storage of materials. Roadways and adjacent drives must be kept clear at all times. Where this presents problems an alternative solution must be proposed, discussed and agreed with the committee beforehand.
- 9) Verges must be restored to grass on completion, to the satisfaction of the Roads Committee.
- 10) Where heavy vehicles are to be driven over the drive or estate verges, steel plate reinforcement must be used to spread individual axle loads and to protect services.
- 11) The construction and layout of the estate roads are not suitable for large vehicles or articulated lorries, and so the contractor must ensure that appropriately sized vehicles are used. Tracked vehicles must not be allowed to travel on the estate roads under their own power at any time whatsoever.
- 12) The committee will specify which entrance(s) are to be used for any specific contract, and this information must be given to all contractors and suppliers. Contractors vehicles, deliveries, plant, skip lorries etc are permitted on estate roads only between 08:00 and 18:00 hours on weekdays and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. These are also the permitted hours of work on site. No work or deliveries are permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays without the express consent of the directors. Lorries etc arriving outside these hours must lay---up outside the estate boundaries.
- 13) The burning of any material on site is strictly forbidden.
- 14) Noise from machinery, radios etc is to be kept to a minimum to avoid disturbance to neighbours.
- 15) The contractor shall display at the road entrance to the site an out of hours emergency contact telephone number.
- 16) The contractor must permit and ensure safe access for the Directors or their accredited representatives at any reasonable time during the construction.

## **7. Procedures**

**Residents and developers are advised to undertake informal discussions on any proposed development with immediate neighbours, the Roads Committee representative and the Planning Authority before any plans are finalised.**

Two copies of scale drawings sufficient to show the proposals in detail should be submitted to the Roads Committee before planning consent (if necessary) is sought from CDC, and before any work starts on site.

The drawings will be considered by the Development Sub---Committee and their architectural adviser, discussed as necessary with the applicant and recommendations will be made to the Roads Committee at their next scheduled meeting. These are held approximately every two months, and time should be allowed for this procedure to be followed. If approved, a signed copy of the drawings will be returned to the applicant on receipt of the development fee. Applicants are strongly advised to keep the signed approved drawings as they are necessary to show compliance with the estate covenants.

The development fee is set in accordance with a formula based on the areas of demolition and construction, and is reviewed periodically to ensure that it reflects accurately the impact of wear and tear on the estate roads.

Any variation to the approved drawings must be agreed by the committee before implementation, and the development fee may be revised if the size or nature of the development has changed.

Residents or developers shall supply to the committee a copy of the construction timetable when known, together with contact telephone numbers for key individuals such as site owner, designer and main contractor.

### **Contacts**

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